

Celebrating the creative vision of artists working in clay, fiber, glass, metal & wood

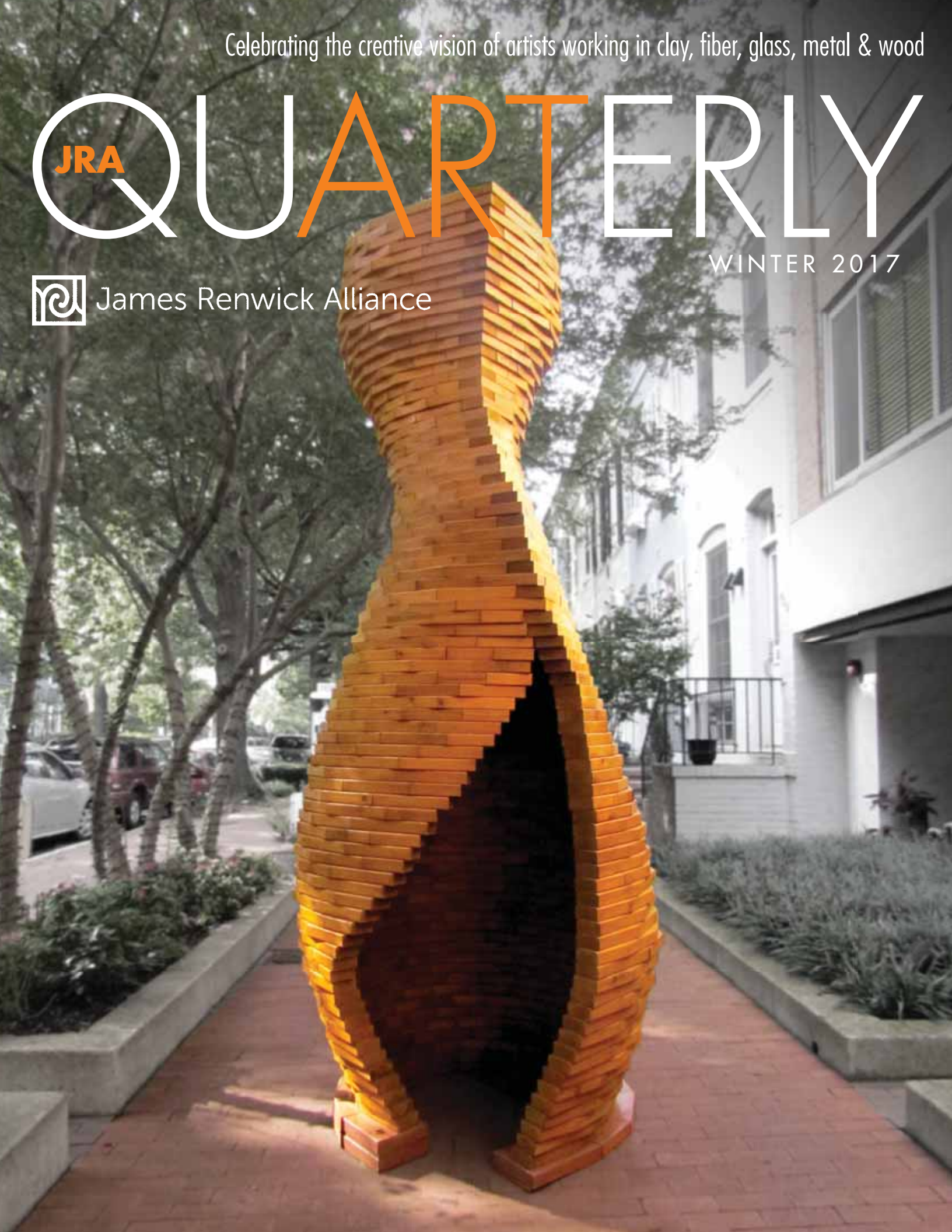
QUARTERLY

JRA

WINTER 2017



James Renwick Alliance



THE JRA QUARTERLY

EDITOR Jaimianne Amicucci

COPY EDITORS Gerry Ostrove,
Jacqueline Urow, Cicie Sattarnilasskorn

GRAPHIC DESIGNER CSA Studio

COVER PHOTO Artwork by Foon Sham

JAMES RENWICK ALLIANCE

4405 East West Highway, Suite 510

Bethesda, MD 20814

Phone: 301.907.3888 Fax: 301.907.3855

Admin@jra.org/www.jra.org

The JRA Quarterly is published three times a year by the James Renwick Alliance, an independent national non-profit organization, created to recognize the achievements of America's craft artists and to foster scholarship, education and public appreciation of craft art.

Any opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the JRA, its Board of Directors or the Renwick Gallery and its staff.

The JRA Quarterly is published for members of the James Renwick Alliance and is not for sale.

Although efforts have been made to eliminate errors of fact, spelling and grammar, the editor apologizes in advance for any such errors that may remain.

JAMES RENWICK ALLIANCE OFFICERS

PRESIDENT Jacqueline D. Urow

VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAMS Ann Miller

VICE PRESIDENT, DEVELOPMENT Geraldine Ostrove

TREASURER Lynn Chadwick

SECRETARY Julianna Mahley

JAMES RENWICK ALLIANCE STAFF

DIRECTOR Cicie Sattarnilasskorn

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear JRA Members and Friends,

As the days begin to lengthen, our thoughts turn to warm weather and to Spring Craft Weekend. Join us at the glorious Washington National Cathedral as we celebrate the 35th Anniversary of the Renwick Alliance and honor our five Masters of the Media. The live Masters Auction promises to be spectacular.

This edition we welcome our new editor Jaimianne Amicucci. Jaimianne is a curator, arts

administrator and "occasional artist" who owns and operates The Gray Gallery, a regional contemporary craft gallery in Winchester, Virginia. Jaimianne was awarded a 2016/17 Research Fund Grant from the Center for Craft, Creativity & Design. She plans to compile and publish the first comprehensive examination of craft artists, exhibitions, institutions, organizations and supporters located in and around Washington, DC.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Johanna Thompson who served us as editor extraordinaire. She will continue to work on behalf of the Alliance in her other volunteer roles.

The Renwick Gallery is presenting two retrospective shows this spring: *June Schwarz: Invention and Variation*, opening on March 10, and *Voulkos: the Breakthrough Years*, opening on April 7. A portion of recent Alliance contributions has been allocated to supporting these shows and we are delighted to announce that members will be invited to the joint opening.

Please take time to review the article on the Annual Membership Meeting, particularly if you were unable to attend. I sat in awe while our dedicated board members discussed our financial health and outlined plans and programs for the upcoming year. It promises to be a great year of fun and fundraising!

Wishing you a warm and healthy year,

Jacqueline Urow

Jacqueline Urow
President, James Renwick Alliance



CONTENTS

JRA NEWS

- 3** American Craft Council Conference
- 4** JRA Day Recap
- 5** Ode to Prague
- 6** JRA Annual Meeting
- 7** JRA Meet-Ups Take Off:
Pottery on the Hill 2016
- 8** Distinguished Artist Series
Judit Varga
- 10** Distinguished Artist Series
Barton Rubenstein
- 10** Upcoming DAS

INTERESTING PEOPLE

- 11** New Craft Perspectives at the Renwick Gallery
Abraham Thomas
- 12** AU Crafting a History in DC
Jack Rasmussen

SPRING CRAFT WEEKEND PREVIEW

- 13** Spring Craft Weekend Schedule
- 13** Advertise in SCW Program
- 14** Masters of Medium
- 16** National Cathedral: A Craft-Lovers Delight

MEMBER PROFILE

- 17** Anthony Glander



Artwork by Foon Sham

FROM THE EDITOR



As the new editor of the James Renwick Alliance Quarterly, I look forward to continuing the legacy of this great publication and I hope to build on its strong foundation. The Quarterly was started in 1983 to provide news about the Renwick Gallery to JRA members. Today, the Quarterly has expanded to include articles about the greater craft community as it relates to JRA programs and events. I wish to thank former editor Johanna Thompson for dedicating time throughout the transition and for her amazing work over the past several years. Sincere gratitude also goes to Clemmer Montague for advancing the newsletter into the professional publication it is today. A record of the Quarterly dating back to 2006 can be found at www.jra.org.

For more information about how to get involved, please email me at: Jaimianne.a@gmail.com ■

Jaimianne Amicucci



Tree Vessel by JRA member Anthony Glander

BECOMING A MEMBER

- DONOR** \$125 single | \$200 dual*
- ART** (Alliance for Renwick Tomorrow) \$80 single
- SPONSOR** \$300 single | \$500 dual*
- GALLERY** \$500 (for galleries and art organizations)
- CRAFT LEADERS CAUCUS** \$1000 single | \$1800 dual*
- BENEFACTOR** \$2500

*dual—two members at the same address

New Renewal

Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss Other _____

Name _____

Email _____

Are you an Artist? Yes No

If yes, website address: www._____

Second member (dual member at the same address)

Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss Other _____

Name _____

Email _____

Are you an Artist? Yes No

If yes, website address: www._____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Country _____ Phone _____

Communications Preference: Email Mail Phone

METHOD OF PAYMENT

\$ _____ Check payable to James Renwick Alliance

\$ _____ Charge:

Visa MasterCard AMEX Discover

Account No. _____ Exp. _____

Signature (required) _____

Mail to: James Renwick Alliance

4405 East-West Highway Suite 510, Bethesda, MD 20814

Or join or renew online at: JRA.org

JRA Members at the ACC Conference, Photo Courtesy of Jacqueline Urow.



PRESENT TENSE: AMERICAN CRAFT COUNCIL'S (ACC) 2016 CONFERENCE AT OMAHA'S KANEKO CENTER

Top: Attendees converging at the ACC Conference, Photograph by Ben Semisch, Courtesy of the American Craft Council.
Bottom: Toast led by Stuart Kestenbaum, Photograph by Ben Semisch, Courtesy of the American Craft Council.

Diane J. Charnov

The American Craft Council (ACC) held its 12th national conference in Omaha, Nebraska from October 13 – 15, 2016 at the Kaneko Center, an interdisciplinary space for creativity. Over 300 participants, including a strong contingent of JRA members, gathered to engage in meetings, ice-breakers, and conversation centered on this year's theme: Present Tense.

Chris Amundsen, ACC's Executive Director, described the conference as an effort to explore, "tensions between old and new, traditional and contemporary, and the past and future as it affects our field today." Attendees were treated to innovative ways of approaching long-standing issues in craft and encouraged to interact with creative thought-leaders including Seattle glassblower Nancy Callan, TED Fellow Tino Chow; Fabio Fernandez of the Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston; potter Mark Shapiro; RISD President Rosanne Somerson; and Oregon writer and curator Namita Gupta Wiggers.

The JRA was repeatedly acknowledged by Sonya Clark, chair of Craft and Material Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), and Stuart Kestenbaum, head of the Craft Consortium, both of whom spoke eloquently of their experiences in the JRA's 2016 Spring Craft Weekend. Fiber artist Shea Wilkinson exuded

pride in her selection as the recipient of the JRA's Chrysalis Award (2016) at an ACC "Craft and Scotch" event held at The Bench, a converted industrial space for woodworkers.

Whether one came to hear innovative presentations on art and activism by Ayumi Horie, studio potter and founder of the Democratic Cup Project; explore the role of craft and community with Professor Michael Strand and artist Nicholas Galanin; learn of the future of institutional leadership with Penland's Jean McLaughlin; or witness the acceptance of the Gold Medal for Consummate Craftsmanship Award by renowned textile artist Gerhardt Knodel, the consensus was that the ACC succeeded in creating an energetic forum to consider the future of craft. JRA's Pati Young, who is also an ACC Board member, reflected on the dynamic power of "gathering students, scholars, collectors, and makers together" in the stunning space that is the Kaneko Center. The building houses the Kaneko Creativity Library and is filled with artwork by internationally renowned artists including, Viola Frey, Jun Kaneko, Therman Statom, and Akio Takamori. "Present Tense" opened eyes and minds to the important work of the ACC as it charts a future course where all, including JRA members, can come together over critical issues that dominate the world of craft. ■



JRA DAY: Another Great Day

View of the crowd at JRA Day. Photo by Dennis McCloud.

Thirty-nine artists, hundreds of visitors, and dozens of volunteers made the 9th annual JRA Day a great success.

The setup crew arrived at 8:00, moving furniture, arranging tables and panels for the artists, and placing signs up and down Connecticut Avenue. The artists began arriving at 9:00 to get their spaces ready for opening.

By the time the artists completed their setup and the show opened at 11:00, there was a line to get into the room, and sales started immediately. There was a steady stream of visitors throughout the day, and there were periodic reports that the parking lot was full. Volunteers helped ensure that JRA Day ran smoothly by selling raffle tickets, distributing lunches, water, invoices, and bags to the artists, jumping in whenever needed, and staffing the welcome table and sales desk.

The raffle attracted a lot of interest this year, with a platter by John Glick, a brooch by Jan Maddox, and a sculpture by Tim Tate as the prizes. We thank Giselle and Ben Huberman for donating the John Glick and Tim Tate pieces.

By the end of the day, the show had one of the highest sales totals ever, with more than 400 individual purchases, and strong sales for the JRA Day raffle. For the ninth straight year, the Woman's Club of Chevy Chase provided an easy-to-reach venue and accommodated JRA Day's every need, with the staff even helping to tape down power cords so visitors wouldn't trip over them. Thanks to the JRA Day sponsors, free admission helped build the crowd and increase sales. We also want to thank our volunteers, who made everything run smoothly and, most of all, the artists who make the show possible.

Planning already has begun for JRA Day 2017, and we're thinking about special ways to celebrate the show's tenth anniversary. Mark your calendars now for Saturday, December 2, 2017. ■



Floris Flam with her display of art quilts. Photo by Dennis McCloud.



Wood turner Phil Brown talks with buyers. Photo by Clemmer Montague.



Guests admiring the jewelry. Photo by Dennis McCloud.



Felt artist Sharron Parker displays her work. Photo by Clemmer Montague.

AN ODE TO PRAGUE

Robin Levin

The anticipatory pleasure of spending a week with Doug and Katya Heller and a group of fellow glass enthusiasts on a JRA trip, immersed in glass art, architecture, history, and food, was quickly fulfilled as I ventured out on my first sunset stroll down to the Vltava River and across the Charles Bridge. The architecture is executed on a human scale that makes one feel embraced and welcomed, despite occasional jostling by enthusiastic visitors from around the globe. This palpably vital city, animated equally by the clamor of traffic, tourists, and Prague residents, creates its own unique but secure envelope that allows one to drink in the shifting light, the dramatic vistas, and the colorful street-level activity.

The Czech region, by virtue of access to wood and other raw materials, has nurtured a burgeoning glassmaking industry since the middle ages. Indeed, the innovative Czech approaches were embraced by the technical schools, which successfully educated generations of skilled glass technicians, designers, entrepreneurs and artists. Many of these glass artists, based on their virtuosity and vision, have been propelled to the forefront of the art world. Engaging with these world class artists and educators was a treat that defies words. To see the spaces, the raw materials, tools, and often the pieces in progress enhanced my appreciation not just of the processes and the abundant talent, but also of the commitment and dedication of these makers. Though the studios were constrained in size, they were scaled to allow individuals to realize and execute personal visions and seemed devoid of any industrial or commercial agendas that can pit craft against cost.

We were graciously welcomed by a who's who of artists including, Karen Lamonte and her husband, Steve Polaner; Tomáš Hlavicka and his daughter and fellow artist Petra Hřebáčková; Ivan Mareš; Ivana Šrámková; Aleš Vašíček, Vladimira Klumpar and her son; Martin Janecky; Jan Frydrych; and Jaroslava Brychtová who with her late husband, Stanislav Libenský, is still one of the most well recognized and revered Czech glass artists.



The collaborative castings of Libenský and Brychtová are notable for their scale, elegant simplicity, ability to embrace negative space and nuanced infusion of subtle colors. So it was truly delightful to enjoy a sampler of the color chips featured in their work, which was on display at the Libenský and Brychtová Archive and Museum. Mrs. Brychtová met us at the Libenský and Brychtová Archive and Museum, which is a tribute to their long artistic collaboration, and accompanied us for a visit and refreshments at her home, built by her father.

Museum, gallery and tours included the magnificent Strahov Monastery Library and Literary Archive, one of the oldest libraries in Europe containing hand bound volumes shelved by size; Prague Castle and the first Prague fort; the Kampa Museum of modern art, home to the collection of Jan and Meda Mládek; a solo exhibition opening of work by Rony Plesl at the very impressive Prague Castle Belvedere; a tour of Petr Novotný's collection and the Ajeto Art Glass Museum in Nový Bor. There was a remarkable and sobering tour of Prague's Jewish Quarter, where the golem still sleeps in the attic of the Old New Synagogue. We experienced Prague's Municipal Building, a wonderful testimony to the Czech contribution to Art Nouveau architecture and interior design. Lastly, a guided visit to the National Gallery; a stop at the Dox Center and finally, a special tour of the US ambassador's residence in Prague., which is housed in an opulent classicist villa in the exclusive Bubene neighborhood of Prague, commissioned in the late 1920's by Otto Petschek, whose family was forced to leave in 1938 to escape Nazi persecution.

Leoš Válka met us at the Dox Centre for Contemporary Arts, where we witnessed the ongoing installation of work by the finalists for the 2016 Stanislav Libenský Award. The winning pieces were a stunning pair of moulded and cold-worked glass sculptures inspired by microscopic imaging of primordial organisms by Natuki Katukawa from Tokyo University. As a special treat, Mr. Válka escorted us to his fabulous 1/16 scale zeppelin, aptly named Gulliver, that was being erected in the courtyard behind the Art Center. The awesomeness of the interior space exceeded all expectations and, when finished, will be used for presentations and public gatherings including films, performances and debates.

Our last evening was just perfect. It was warm and clear as we dined atop the city at the award-winning Golden Well Restaurant. The meal, enjoyed among new friends, was spectacular and a magnificent capstone to an exceptional trip. ■

Left: Petra Hřebáčková. Top: Karen Lamonte.

ANNUAL MEETING

CELEBRATES 35 YEARS OF SUPPORTING CRAFT



JRA President Jackie Urow with Renwick Gallery curators Nora Atkinson and Abraham Thomas, Photo by Clemmer Montague.

The James Renwick Alliance held its annual meeting on November 15, 2016 at the beautiful American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center. The new venue for the meeting signifies a budding relationship with the American University Museum and the ending of the formal relationship that existed with the Renwick Gallery. Jack Rasmussen, Director and Curator of the museum, was a gracious host. He began the evening by introducing us to the museum and discussing his vision for its future.

President Jacqueline Urow opened the business meeting by reading our revised mission statement. J.G Harrington, standing in for Treasurer Lynn Chadwick, reported that, with our contributions to the Renwick Gallery, the FY 2016 budget remains modestly in the black. Cicie Sattamilasskorn, JRA Director, informed us that the office has nearly completed the transition to a new software for our membership database and payment operations. VP for Development, Geraldine Ostrove, announced the formation of a new development committee and asked members who might be interested in serving on it to contact her. Ann Miller, chair of the Membership Committee, unveiled a coffee and conversation initiative for new member development. Pat Arnold, VP for Programs, enticed us with programs planned for the near future; Sandy Mitchell, chair of the Trips Committee, described upcoming trips, both planned and in preparation; and Diane Charnov discussed new informal membership meet-ups.

Spring Craft Weekend promises to be delightful, with the Gala event at the beautiful Washington National Cathedral. The Masters of the Media, ceramic artist Chris Gustin; furniture-maker Tommy Simpson; fiber artist Gerhardt Knodel; glass artist Toots Zynsky and jewelry artist and sculptor Marilyn da Silva, will talk about their work at a Saturday morning program at VisArts in Rockville. Weekend Patrons and Craft Leaders will visit private craft collections on Sunday. Remember to contact Shirley Jacobs to add your name to the Patron's List.

The highlight of the evening was a presentation by Abraham Thomas, the Renwick Gallery's new Fleur and Charles Bresler Curator in Charge, and Nora Atkinson, Lloyd Herman Curator of Craft. Thomas, who briefly described his tenure at Sir John Soane's Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum, discussed balancing respect and appreciation for the permanent collection with showcasing installation craft such as the Renwick Gallery's recent "Wonder" exhibition. Atkinson previewed upcoming exhibits, including "June Schwarcz: Invention and Variation" (March-August) and "Peter Voulkos: the Breakthrough Years" (April-August.) Many were particularly excited by her plans to exhibit craft from Burning Man, an annual art event in Black Rock Desert, Nevada. Both Thomas and Atkinson emphasized their respect for the James Renwick Alliance and suggested a long future of continued partnership. ■



Marilyn Hardis and JRA Founders Paul and Elmerina Parkman with the Renwick Gallery curators.



Attentive members, Photo by Clemmer Montague.



JRA MEET-UPS TAKE OFF: POTTERY ON THE HILL 2016

Potter Dan Finnegan with “Meet-up” guests

Diane J. Charnov

JRA members gathered to “meet-up” at Pottery on the Hill over the last weekend of October 2016. One of several art meet-ups scheduled for this year and next, the annual showcase of potters was founded by artist and curator Dan Finnegan who graciously treated JRA members to an informal talk and tour of the show.

For nearly two decades, Dan has organized and participated in this eagerly awaited annual ceramics event, within sight of the Capitol. A renowned potter from Fredericksburg, VA, his forms and wood-fired and salt glazes have earned him a spot on many collectors’ tables as well as in the hearts of his fellow artists, students, and friends. Dan eagerly shared stories about his roots in the English ceramics tradition at Winchcombe Pottery, and his commitment to bringing some of the finest potters in the region to the Old Naval Hospital near Eastern Market.

JRA members had the chance to meet the makers and get their hands into clay with the addition of Pottery on Wheels (POW), a mobile clay studio stationed in the Hill Center’s courtyard.

Seventeen skilled artists participated, including Matthew Metz, admired for his inventive designs etched in clay and Catherine White, whose large-scale ceramic totems stood 6’ tall alongside her beautiful and quiet wood-fired cups embedded with text. The diverse forms and makers’ approaches to clay gave those who came ample opportunity to admire the work and leave with bags filled with treasures from established and emerging artists.

The JRA plans to continue the meet-up format: a free gathering, requiring relatively little energy to organize but reaping high rewards for those who partake. Here nearly a dozen members and guests mingled with artists and learned about art, techniques, and inspiration as they explored the 145-year old D.C. landmark that once served as a post-Civil War hospital. Afterwards, the group headed next door to the Bayou for coffee, beignets, and conversation. Current and prospective members shared a table and their views on art. They left with a consensus that meet-ups are an easy way to connect and enjoy the world of craft, together. ■

Pottery on the Hill Artists (2016): Mary Barringer (Shelburne Falls, MA), Bob Briscoe (Harris, MN), Bulldog Pottery –Bruce Gholson & Samantha Henneke (Seagrove, NC), Kyle Carpenter (Asheville, NC), Trista Depp Chapman (Fredericksburg, VA), Naomi Dalglish (Bakersville, NC), Dan Finnegan (Fredericksburg, VA), Ryan Greenheck (Philadelphia, PA), Rick Hensley (Floyd, VA), Michael Hunt (Bakersville, NC), Matthew Hyleck (Baltimore, MD), Matthew Metz (Alfred Station, NY), Ronan Peterson (Chapel Hill, NC), Donna Polseno (Floyd, VA), Stacy Snyder (Arlington, VA) and Catherine White (Warrenton, VA).

Distinguished Artist Series: Ceramic Artist Judit Varga



Diane J. Charnov



A Local Treasure with a National and International Reputation

JRA members who attended the Distinguished Artist Series (DAS) over September 24th – 25th with ceramic artist, Judit Varga, received a dual treat. Her Kensington, MD studio workshop showcased her intimacy with clay as she deftly coiled clay slabs into ceramic cocoons. In her eloquent and richly accented English, Judit's Smithsonian lecture traced her roots in Hungary, her journey to England and eventually to the United States, her

home since 1993. Throughout the weekend, Judit provided insight into the inspiration that informs her sculptural vessels, wall installations, pods, knots, circles and squares. These organic forms have become her unique language in clay and speak to her fascination with change and decay, transformation and growth.

Those present learned how her Hungarian roots played a significant role in her work today. She traced influences from her childhood in an isolated region of Hungary, a valley near the Austrian border where she first enjoyed wondrous walks in nature. It is there she began her fascination with collecting leaves and pods, a fascination evident in her studio dotted with shells and other natural forms that resemble her sculptural work. Her admiration for a local and highly regarded Hungarian ceramicist, Maria Geszler Garzuly, her father's work in a ceramics factory, and her training in mathematics in college and art education at Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, all coalesced to influence her decision to become an artist.

While her sculptural work and wall hangings have been widely praised on the local scene, Judit has a broad national and international reputation that is rapidly growing. Recently, she was selected for one of the most prestigious ceramics events in the world, the Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale (GICB) in Korea. Earlier in her career, Garth Clark and Mark Del Vecchio honored her at the San Angelo National Ceramics Competition and she received the Korman prize for Excellence in Clay 2016. Collectors seek her out at the ACC Show Baltimore, Smithsonian Craft Show, SOFA (Chicago), and at the Philadelphia Museum of Art Contemporary Craft show. A devoted artist, she is also highly regarded by her students and colleagues at the GWU/Corcoran School of the Arts and Design.



Top: Remain. Left: Installation photo, Page 9, Top Left: Flower 1, Top Right: Black Cocoon, Bottom right: Installation photo



Judit's reverence for clay mesmerized JRA members as she revealed the techniques and inspiration behind her creations. As she posed the deceptively simple question, "What is clay?" her response provided both a technical and philosophical answer: "Clay is hydrated alumina silicate...clay is not dirt, mud, or soil. It is a living material, which contains all the elements of life. Created by decomposition...made malleable by water, dried by air and fired into forever shape by fire. That is my philosophy. When I think about clay, it is alive." Those present witnessed how she breathes life into her forms through her touch in clay.

While Judit is bilingual, her voice in clay is also an important form of expression. Committed to letting "the clay itself speak," her decision to apply the colorant as "slip" (liquefied clay) before it is fired is a good example of this. Unlike the more common American approach to glazing as a separate act, Judit explained that for her, surface colors are "not an addition" but literally "bonded from the beginning and more than skin deep." Working in the tradition of European ceramicists and those who "once fire" she added it's not in a "negative way," it's just different.

Along with abundant references to the natural world in her work, her comments revealed her strong belief in partnerships. She spoke with pride about her husband and two nearly grown adult daughters. Observing her dual clay forms, where cups lean and comfortably sink into squared forms, and pods coexist in a calm union with miniature cocoons, her joy in relationships constructed in clay is evident.

As the weekend drew to a close, Judit urged people to take time and look inside, noting there is much to be revealed. "When, if you have a second, look; the first time never reveals everything. If someone waits and takes time to stop, there is more information behind the wall...you can see inside if you want to." For those who took the time, the rewards of observing such a talented

artist at work and appreciating the rich interiors she creates were well worth the effort. Her closing comments might also serve to encourage those who appreciate craft to take a closer look and attend future JRA/DAS gatherings for unique opportunities to learn about artists, their work, and their inspiration. ■



For those who missed the weekend events, her work can be found at www.juditvarga.net.

Distinguished Artist Series: Barton Rubenstein

Rebecca Ravenal



On November 19 and 20, Barton Rubenstein presented a workshop and lecture as part of the JRA Distinguished Artist Series. This season, the DAS focused on “local treasures” who have added significantly to the artistic scene in the DC area.

Barton is fascinated by the effects of light, water, kinetics and suspension, often incorporating these elements

into his large scale metal pieces. Drawing on his background in neuroscience and the study of the visual system, Barton creates dynamic works which deal with illusion and perception. He has perfected techniques which allow his sculptures to move in the wind and be enlivened by flowing water, creating engaging, ever-changing artworks for public enjoyment.

JRA members visited Barton’s Chevy Chase home and studio to learn more about how and why he makes these wonderful works. We began with a discussion of Barton’s former research in brain development, which continues to inform his artwork. In creating his pieces, he thinks about how the metal will shimmer and change as it rotates or be partially obscured by a curtain of water pouring over the top. Shape and line undulate as wind takes hold of the metal, pushing it like a sail of stainless steel.

All of this magical movement begins as plain sheets of dull metal. Barton marks the shape and uses a plasma cutter to slice out flat pieces, which he welds together to form hollow structures. With grinding tools, he adds the markings which give texture and interest to the metal. The carefully designed internal supports regulate movement and allow the pieces to sway effortlessly or spout elegant sheets of water or rise 30 feet into the air in a seemingly impossible way.

Barton’s deep and wide-ranging interests have also spurred him to create an international program which combines his art with his strong environmental activism. His latest work, a giant stainless steel human profile, dwarfed our group as we rounded the corner to his backyard studio. Versions of this sculpture will be presented to countries around the world to celebrate their achievement of global environmental goals.

For more information: <http://www.rubensteinstudios.com/>

Additionally, at his lecture at the Katzen Arts Center Barton talked about the “Mother Earth Project”, his family’s initiative to spur environmental awareness on a more personal level. He unveiled a key part of the MEP, an inflatable structure of his own design which houses a digital display of people’s efforts to help the environment and offers an interactive way for individuals to get involved. Ideally, these inflatables will be set up in public places for Earth Day and other events to be a catalyst for awareness and action.

Like his artwork, Barton seems to be in perpetual motion and reaching upwards to make significant work that delights the senses and activates the conscience. Not only is he creating beautiful objects, but he is helping to craft the best world possible for our generation and beyond. ■

Photo by Rebecca Ravenal

DISTINGUISHED ARTIST SERIES 2016-17

For this season of the JRA Distinguished Artist Series, we are featuring “local treasures,” four artists who contribute significantly to the richness of the artistic environment in our area. Each artist will present a Saturday workshop and a Sunday lecture.

FOON SHAM APRIL 22-23

Using small bits, Foon Sham creates large scale vessels take on shapes like tornados or mountains, baskets, or even a giant vase-like piece, which viewers can sit inside. His smaller works echo these larger structures, exploring the intersection of natural vs. manmade, permanence vs. instability, geometric vs. organic. Sham is a professor at University of Maryland, and exhibits nationally and internationally.

HELEN FREDERICK MAY 20-21

Helen Frederick works primarily in paper, making pulp prints, artists books, paintings and drawings. Her pieces explore the use of language and media, and are informed by her appreciation of nature, sound and cultural references. She is founder of Pyramid Atlantic arts center, taught widely, collaborated with many artists across disciplines and participated in the growth and support of the arts in the DC area.

New Craft Perspectives at the Renwick Gallery

ABRAHAM THOMAS

Jaimianne Amicucci



The Smithsonian American Art Museum announced in September 2016 the appointment of Abraham Thomas as the new Fleur and Charles Bresler Curator-in-Charge for the Renwick Gallery. Nicholas Bell stepped down to become Senior Vice President For Curatorial Affairs at Mystic Seaport in Connecticut.

Thomas comes to the Renwick from

Sir John Soane's Museum in London, and previously worked at the Victoria and Albert Museum. He speaks enthusiastically about his new position. "I was attracted to the Renwick role because we have fantastic staff here – they have done such a brilliant job with the restoration of the building and the tremendous success of WONDER" the major show that signaled the reopening of the gallery after its two-year renovation.

The new curator has experience in museums, notably with exhibitions and institutions centered on the history of architecture. When asked about this background and its possible influence on his future work at the Renwick Gallery, Thomas responded, "I'm a big believer in dissolving artificial boundaries between artistic disciplines, an approach which was deeply ingrained in all of us at the V&A." He continued, "This is a concept which has real relevance for contemporary craft, with its ability to be nimble across different forms of creative practice. During my time at both the V&A and the Soane Museum, I enjoyed working closely with designers and architects and getting an insight into their process, design thinking and attitude to materials – all of which are themes important to explaining craft to contemporary audiences."

While Thomas served as curator of designs at the Victoria and Albert Museum, a position he held from 2006 to 2013, he curated *Heatherwick Studio: Designing the Extraordinary* (2012) and *1:1 – Architects Build Small Spaces* (2010). To prepare for the Heatherwick exhibition, Thomas went "in-residence" at Heatherwick's design

studio to do his research. The creative process inspired him to include models and sketches into the exhibit. "Visitors to the exhibition felt like they were entering the studio workshop itself, and they really got the sense of Thomas Heatherwick as a 'maker'." A unique aspect of the exhibition was the inclusion of useable Heatherwick chairs in the courtyard of the museum.

During his tenure as director of the Sir John Soane's Museum, Thomas oversaw a major restoration project and sought to show relationships between the past and the present through his exhibitions. "I have always believed in the huge potential of being able to understand the past through the contemporary — and vice versa, to allow the work of contemporary artists and designers to offer fresh perspectives on the work of historical makers... A fine example of this is the 3-D printed model of Hiram Powers' Greek Slave we have on display in the Octagon Room [of the Renwick Gallery]."

Nora Atkinson, who joined the museum's staff in March 2014 as Lloyd Herman Curator of Craft, has been preparing several exhibitions as Thomas gets acquainted with his new position. Thomas says these exhibitions "look at craft in an entirely different context." They include an exhibition featuring crime scene dioramas known as the *Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death* that will open in Fall 2017, and a big show celebrating 30 years of the Burning Man festival, in Nevada's Black Rock Desert, scheduled for 2018. Other shows to look forward to include retrospectives on Peter Voulkos and June Schwarcz in Spring 2017.

Thomas praises the staff in their efforts to create new perspectives of craft and hopes to continue on that path. "I think we have a tremendous opportunity to examine the increasingly expansive definitions of craft – to better understand how craft has a presence in fine art, design, performance, architecture, science, and technology – and to broaden our audiences as a result." Based on Thomas's past experiences, we can look forward to a broadening definition of craft, exploring unique processes and seeing history in new contexts at the Renwick Gallery. ■

AU Crafting a History in DC

“Washington is a city of great museums. We decided early on to do what the other Washington museums couldn’t or wouldn’t do ...”

—
 Jack Rasmussen, *Director and Curator of the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center*

JACK RASMUSSEN



Over the past twelve years, Rasmussen’s showing of political, international and local works has made the museum a beacon for art in DC. A longtime lover of craft, he has incorporated it into his exhibitions as the assistant director for the Washington Project for the Arts, a gallery owner, director of Maryland Arts Place, and now as the Director

and Curator of the American University Museum.

One of the Museum’s most significant effects on the craft scene in DC, is its dedication to local artists. The Alper Initiative for Washington Art provides not only a dedicated space inside the museum to display work by DC artists, but funds a digital archive and sponsors films and lectures. “We support the artists and craftspeople in our community because the university takes an active and responsible role in the formation of our region’s contemporary art and culture,” says Rasmussen. This unique institutional stance can be seen in the upcoming exhibition of local artist Foon Sham, who is one of this year’s JRA Distinguished Artists. According to Rasmussen, Sham will be building a 38’ tower in the museum’s stairwell, and a 70’ wall in the Sculpture Garden.

The Museum has exhibited artists from the United States and around the world. The museum’s major craft exhibitions have included *Gary Knox Bennett: Call Me Chairmaker*; *Silvia Levenson: La Identidad*; *Walter McConnell—Itinerant Edens: Of Fable and Facsimile*; *Mary Shaffer — Reflections and Contradictions: five decades*; *Collaborations: Robert Hudson and Richard Shaw*; *Soaring Voices: Recent Ceramics by Women from Japan*. In the fall of 2015 the museum exhibited *What If Textiles: The Art of Gerhardt Knodel*, a solo show by the JRA 2017 Masters of the Medium Award in Fiber.

With its craft related exhibitions and local engagement, there is no denying that the American University Museum and its director Jack Rasmussen are leaving a mark on the DC craft scene. New collaborations with the JRA hope to encourage this focus. Rasmussen flatters the organization by saying, “The JRA is maybe the best run and most active group of supporters a museum could have. It is our honor to collaborate with the JRA on exhibitions and programs of mutual interest and benefit. I am especially interested in accessing the expertise that JRA members have to develop future programming.”

For more information: <http://www.american.edu/cas/museum/about.cfm>. ■



Highsmith: From the Carol M. Highsmith Archive collection at the Library of Congress.

SPRING CRAFT WEEKEND APRIL 1-2, 2017

Meet the Masters of the Media **9:15AM, SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 2017**

We'll kick off the festivities with our five Masters of the Media who will make presentations and answer your questions about their work in glass, clay, fiber, metal and wood over coffee at Rockville's unique VisArts (where you'll also be invited to tour some of the local artists' studios.)

A Gala. An Auction. A Cathedral. **6PM, SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 2017**

A special anniversary demands a special anniversary Gala. We'll be celebrating in grand, black-tie-optional style, surrounded by the amazing beauty and history of the Washington National Cathedral. We'll drink, we'll dine, and we'll honor our Masters and one of our own. Our live auction will find us bidding on selected works from each of our five Masters of the Media as well as a craft adventure or two.

Caucus Day Highlights **Craft Collections**

11AM, SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 2017

Craft Leaders Caucus Day will be the final event in our weekend festivities. It will feature tours of some very private collections and a program that promises to create lively discussions over brunch at Somerset House in Chevy Chase.

ADVERTISING IN THE SPRING CRAFT WEEKEND PROGRAM

It's time to think about placing an ad in Spring Craft Weekend's Gala Program Book! The Gala in the National Cathedral promises to be a major event and your ad will be seen by a receptive crowd. The complete Program Book will be emailed to all 500 JRA members. Express your support and appreciation of our talented artists; congratulate our hard-working awardees; or thank SCW volunteer organizers for all they do to make this event so successful. The Saturday AM event is free and open to the public. The Gala is \$395 per person. No cost for Patrons. Sunday is \$150 for Non-Patron Caucus Members. No cost for Patrons. We do also want to be clear that the Sunday event is only for Patrons and Caucus members.

Deadline for submission: Mid-February.

Full page ads are \$400, half-page are \$200, and quarter-page are \$100. -or- Contribute to the Tribute Ad: Have your name(s) included for only \$50.

Please contact *Toni Alaimo and Betsy Hennigan* for information or to purchase your ad. tonialaimo@gmail.com or betsyhennigan@yahoo.com

MASTERS OF MEDIUM

Five artists are being honored this year at the James Renwick Alliance Spring Craft Weekend as masters of their medium. Each has made a profound impact on the craft field as both an artist and an organizer, and each continues to impress us with his or her art, passion, and dedication. We thank the Masters of the Medium Committee for their tireless efforts: Judy Weisman and Marc Grainer (Co-chairs), Jan Maddox, Chris Rifkin and Darcy Walker. ■

MARILYN DA SILVA, MASTER OF THE MEDIUM IN METAL/JEWELRY



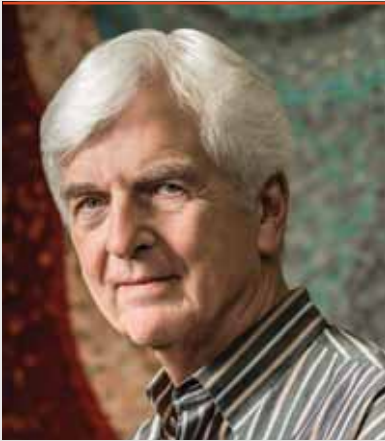
Marilyn da Silva's narrative sculptures and wearable works are made from a variety of mediums, including her signature use of gesso and colored pencil. She has exhibited internationally, including at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the National Gallery of Australia. An established educator, she has been a professor and Program Chair of the Jewelry/Metal Arts Department at California College of the Arts in Oakland since 1987, and she has given over 100 public lectures workshops. Her highest honors include "Master Metalsmith 1999" from the National Ornamental Metal Museum in Memphis, Tennessee, and in 2007 she was named a Fellow of the American Craft Council.

CHRIS GUSTIN, MASTER OF THE MEDIUM IN CERAMICS



Chris Gustin's family were part owners of several commercial whiteware manufacturing companies, and he interrupted college to spend two years as a foreman and manager, expecting to go into the business. Instead, he decided to focus on ceramic art. He received his BFA from Kansas City Arts Institute, his MFA from Alfred University and has been making pots and teaching ever since. In 1986, he founded the Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts in Newcastle, Maine. Gustin has received two Visual Artists Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, and in 2016 he was named to the American Craft Council College of Fellows. His signature figurative, bulbous shapes and large scaled works were part of a major retrospect that traveled to the Fuller Craft Museum, Alfred University and the Daum Museum.

GERHARDT KNODEL, MASTER OF THE MEDIUM IN FIBER/BASKETS



Gerhardt Knodel is Director Emeritus and former Head of the Fiber Department of Cranbrook Academy of Art. His work includes large fiber installations and numerous architectural commissions. He graduated with a BFA from the University of California, Los Angeles, and an MFA at California State University, Long Beach. In 1993 he became an Honorary Fellow of the American Crafts Council and in 2016 received their prestigious Gold Metal Award. He has received an honorary doctorate from the Maryland Institute College of Art, and in 2002 received the Distinguished Craft Educators Award from the James Renwick Alliance.

TOMMY SIMPSON, MASTER OF THE MEDIUM IN WOOD/TURNED



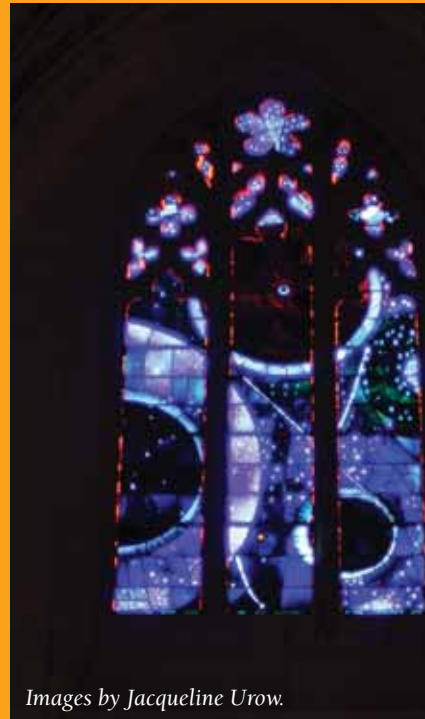
Whether it's wood, paint, clay, printmaking, or jewelry, Tommy Simpson's studio furniture and artwork all have an identifiable sense of whimsy. Simpson is a prolific artist who has exhibited at the country's top craft institutions including the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, the Fuller Craft Museum, the Kohler Arts Center, and the Society for Contemporary Craft in Pittsburgh. He has received awards from the Furniture Society, the American Crafts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts, and authored three books about art and the home.

TOOTS ZYNSKY, MASTER OF THE MEDIUM IN GLASS



Mary Ann "Toots" Zynsky is known for her distinctive heat-formed filet de verre (glass thread) vessels. In 1971 she was one of a small group of friends and students from the Rhode Island School of Design who accompanied Dale Chihuly to Washington state, where she participated in the founding and early development of the Pilchuck Glass School. In 1980, Zynsky became assistant director and head of the hot shop at the New York Experimental Glass Workshop in New York City, now known as UrbanGlass. During the mid-1980s to mid-1990s she traveled and maintained an international glass practice in Amsterdam, the UK, Ghana, Venice, Murano, Tokyo, and Zürich. Zynsky lives in Providence, Rhode Island where she continues to work and exhibit internationally. Currently, she is the Specialty Glass Artists-in-Residence for 2016 at the Corning Museum of Glass.

Washington National Cathedral: A CRAFT-LOVER'S DELIGHT



Images by Jacqueline Urow.

Left: Nol Punman's latest work for the Cathedral. Middle: Jim Shepherd AIA-LEED-Director of Preservation and Facilities. Right: Space Window.

Jacqueline Urow

Washington National Cathedral, the venue for the Spring Craft Weekend Gala 2017, is renowned for its “American Gothic” architecture. Among its 1242 grotesques and gargoyles are fanciful medieval animals, angels, humorous portraits of carvers, and caricatures of ex-girlfriends. Before stone is touched by a chisel, a full-size sculpture is created in clay. After the design is approved, stonework begins. The newest sculpture, by Chas Fagan and carved by Sean Callahan, depicts the Episcopal seminarian Jonathan Myrick Daniels, who was murdered in a Civil Rights protest while saving another protester.

Ironwork, both massive and finely detailed, is featured in the Cathedral. Philadelphia blacksmith Samuel Yellin created many of the hand-forged gates, grilles, and liturgical embellishments. After his death in 1940, other skilled blacksmiths continued the work. Albert Paley formed the nine-foot Good Shepherd Gate out of steel, brass, and 24K gold-plate. Nol Putnam designed and created 3 columbarium gates, and most recently, a footed iron holder for a large holiday wreath.

The glasswork is spectacular. Forty-two stained glass windows and 6 mosaics were designed by Rowan LeCompte, some in collaboration with his first wife, Irene Matz LeCompte. Just as

each stone sculpture is first executed in clay, each window is first detailed in a cartoon. A principal fabricator of the windows was German craftsman Dieter Goldkuhle. To make “Creation,” the Cathedral’s west rose window, he fitted more than 10,500 hand-cut pieces of glass into a lead framework in his Reston studio. Using scaffolding, he installed the 20’ window, segment by segment, over a two-year period.

“Women of the Bible” is one of the few major nave windows designed by a woman, Brenda Belfield. Her designs can also be seen in a 22 abstract windows in the northwest tower. Over 30 glass artists collaborated during the construction of the Cathedral to complete the stained glass windows. Cleaning and restoration takes place on an ongoing basis.

Sixteenth-century tapestries, contemporary needlepoint, elaborate carved wood railings, screens, reredos, seating and figurative armrests, and worked-silver, including crucifixes, alms-basins, chalices and ciboria, some inset with gems, are but a partial list of hand-crafted treasures.

We look forward to enjoying the fine craft when we celebrate the JRA’s 35th Anniversary at the Gala on April 1st. ■

anthony glander



James Renwick Alliance member Tony Glander has lived in the D.C. area his entire life, growing up in Rockville, MD, and buying his parents' house 20 years ago. Glander is a glass artist whose love for experimentation shows as he incorporates stained, etched, and fused glass into his creations. Here, he speaks about his glass art, his roles as an organizer in the craft field, and his latest work for the JRA.



Maya T" by Anthony Glander. Photo by the artist.

How long have you been working in glass, how did you get started in the arts and where has it led you today?

I have been working in glass since taking a stained glass class in 1986. I started working at the same studio part-time soon after. Three years later, when I went in to quit, the owner told me she had decided to sell the studio. It was a great opportunity. She had just brought visual artist Narcissus Quagliata in for class and he really opened my eyes. I purchased the studio in 1990 and started bringing in nationally known artists to teach. In 2001, we built a studio behind my home, and got rid of the storefront. In 2002, I became artist in residence at the City of Gaithersburg Arts Barn and have maintained a studio there ever since. I also travel nationally to teach various techniques in stained and fused glass. I am presently president of the American Glass Guild.

How did you get involved with the James Renwick Alliance?

The JRA was very supportive of the Creative Crafts Council when I was chairman. So a few Council members and I came to the Spring Craft Weekend brunch one year. We were amazed. It was great getting to meet such accomplished artists. I had heard that the JRA needed help with the slide shows at the brunch and offered my help. I have been helping with them ever since. It has been an incredible opportunity to meet some of my most admired artists, like Lino Tagliapietra.

As someone who has served as the Chairman of the Creative Crafts Council and as a local glass artist, how would you describe the DC craft scene and how has it changed over the years?

It is an amazing, living, breathing, evolving entity! Beginning as an artist prior to the advancement of technology, and then watching it influence art, is incredible on its own. But when you look at glass-working in the DC area, we are really blessed. The original studio I bought was a storefront that sold stained glass supplies and taught classes. Today similar places are true art studios and the students feed off the energy of their instructors to take the whole art glass field to the next level. I think DC has a very vibrant craft life and it seems to just be accelerating. Washington Glass School is one example.

You are crafting the awards for JRA Day. Can you tell us a little about what we can expect?

You can expect to see interesting glass highlighting the JRA logo and the honoree. I have been working with screen-printed images in fused glass. It makes a strong statement because you are really able to emphasize the beauty in the incredible art glass that is being made today. ■

SAVE THE DATES



JANUARY 26-29

Sarasota Glass Weekend

FEBRUARY 28

Torpedo Factory Artist's Tour

MARCH 11

Studio Visit with artist Winifred Chao

APRIL 1

Foon Sham exhibition opens at
American University Museum at
the Katzen Arts Center

APRIL 1-2

Spring Craft Weekend 2017

APRIL 22-23

Foon Sham (*DAS Weekend*)

MAY 1-7

Paris Caucus Trip

MAY 20-21

Helen Frederick (*DAS Weekend*)

MAY 26-29

JRA New Orleans Trip (*SNAG Conference*)

JULY 12-16

Seattle Trip

OCTOBER 19-22

Berkshires Trip